RESTORATION REVIEW

How Vast the Resources of His Power!

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.—John 10:27.

See *Resources of Power*
In This Issue

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CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH

In the classified section of a recent issue of *Firm Foundation* appeared this ad from an enterprising sister:

> A Christian widow would like to correspond with a Christian widower or bachelor, 65 or 70 years of age, who must be a member of the Church of Christ Church.-Mrs. A. C. Carter, 217 C. N.W., Ardmore, Oklahoma 73401.

We are not trying to blame the editor of the *Firm Foundation* for anything in this ad, for it is not of his authorship. We do not intend to criticize the dear sister either. As a matter of fact we rather admire the ad and find it most interesting. We hope she finds her man! It is surely as good a way to shop as any, and we think it would be exciting if romance bloomed as a result of an ad in the *Firm Foundation.* Perhaps a re-run of the ad in this journal will enhance our sister's chances all the more.

She is, of course, somewhat unorthodox in the terminology she uses, and one who is in on the know might wonder how she made her way into the columns of the *Firm Foundation* with such language as "Church of Christ Church". Suppose such terminology has ever appeared there before?

And is the dear sister implying that one might be a Christian widower or bachelor and *not* belong to the Church of Christ Church? She says she wants him to be a Christian, and then stipulates the church he must belong to. That is unorthodox too. She must be a *liberal.* If he is a Christian, then he would *have* to be a member of the Church of Christ Church! She could have saved a line in her ad by simply saying "a Christian widower or bachelor", for the readers of the *Firm Foundation* would have understood that if he is a Christian he most certainly would be a member of the Church of Christ Church. Whoever heard of a Christian in the *Firm Foundation* who is not a member of the Church of Christ Church?

Admittedly the sister is not as definite as she supposes herself to be, for there are numerous kinds of Church of Christ Churches, with lines of fellowship clearly drawn between them. If she began a correspondence with a man in a different kind of Church of Christ Church than the one to which she belongs, they would have to resolve the problem of fellowship before the romance got very far. She might have said "*loyal* Church of Christ Church", bur this too is ambiguous, for we have at least a dozen different kinds of *loyal* Church of Christ Churches in Texas alone.

Well, that matter can be worked out once the correspondence is under way. She can check on the preachers he knows and the papers he reads and the college he supports, and find out if he is in the right one. It is a problem, we know. This is one of the lesser reasons why we are working for one great brotherhood of disciples. Our lord's prayer is the main reason, of course, but it may also help matrimonial opportunities. This sister might well find just the man she is looking for among the premillennialists or the non-Sunday School brethren, but as of now this would hardly work our.

We realize that those who are of pure speech within our party would criticize the sister for such inexcuseable language as "Church of Christ Church". Those who know how to use perfect party lingo might seldom, if ever, speak of the church as "the Church of God", but they surely would not say "Church of Christ Church". Horrors! This calls for a sermon on the language of Ashdod.

We wish to defend the sister. Her terminology is most consistent to the condition that exists. The term "Church of Christ Church" is as correct as "Assembly of God Church". Both are, of course, sectarian appellations, but they both refer to sectarian bodies. If we all adopted the sister's terminology it would help to clear the air, and it would give us a better image in the Christian world. To say "Assembly of God" is to refer scripturally to all the children of God, for they indeed compose God's congregation or assembly. But to say "Assembly of God, Church" quite properly refers to but one party within the church at large. This is to assume that some of those in the "Assembly of God Church" belong to the Assembly of God, which we hope is not presuming too much.

So with the Church of Christ. It denotes all Christians everywhere. But "Church of Christ Church" refers to only one group or perhaps several similar groups within the Church of Christ. Again we suppose that there are those within the Church of Christ Church that truly belong to the Church of Christ, which we trust *is* not taking too much for granted.

Language should denote what one means, and it should be unambiguous. When a man tells me he belongs to the Church of God, I am tempted to tell him that I do too. If he should say, "Church of God Church", it would help to clear the air. For this reason the people who designate themselves the Assembly of God Church are communicating better. We are persuaded, therefore, that the sister who wants to meet a boy friend who belongs to

the Church of Christ Church is speaking more forthrightly. Otherwise a Christian Church brother or an Episcopalian might starr writing to her, insisting that he belongs to the Church of Christ. But no one will answer her ad except the ones she has in mind when she lays it on the line and says “Church of Christ Church”.

Now if our brethren are *serious* about not wearing any denominational name, and if they *really* want to avoid any sectarian appellation, then let them drop the name Church of Christ as their exclusive title. They will then erect signs that simply identify the meeting place of Christians, or the assembly, or the church. They will use Church of God, which occurs 12 times more frequently than Church of Christ in the scriptures, or Christian Church, which appears in some versions, or Assembly of God, or Church of the Firstborn as frequently and as meaningfully as Church of Christ. We have done to “Church of Christ” precisely what others have done to “Church of God”. It is just as easy to sectarianize a name that is *in* the Bible as it is one that is *not* in the Bible. This is to assume that “Church of Christ” is in the scriptures, which can be questioned.

The truth is that the Church of Christ of the scriptures has no name, certainly no one name, if we make “name” merely mean *designation* and not a title. The body of Christ is called various things, and each designation has its own special meaning. We therefore lose something when we take but one of those designations to the exclusion of the others.

Well, we hope the good sister finds her man, whether he belongs to the Church of Christ or to the Church of Christ Church. He might, of course, belong to both. We would caution her, however, that one is not necessarily a Christian just because he belongs to the Church of Christ Church. But she is apparently aware of that, for she insists that he be *both a* Christian *and* a member of the Church of Christ Church.

I would like to meet this sister. She is surely an astute and insightful woman. I think I’ll help her find a husband--one that belongs to the Church of Christ Church!

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THE “WHO” IS IMPORTANT

The work of reformation, like all serious aspects of life, has its amusing moments. Quite a list of comical incidents could be assembled from the many experiences that a few of us are having in the current reformation within Churches of Christ.

One such incident took place at a Church of Christ Bible Chair near a state university. At least one of the young ministers conducting the Chair was impressed with what Carl Ketcherside was saying in his *Mission Messenger.* He realized, of course, that this particular journal was “off limits”, and that he had to be cautious in revealing his enthusiasm. An influential preacher was in the city conducting a revival for an influential congregation,

and one day while visiting the Chair he apprised the younger preacher of the danger of reading either *Mission Messenger* or *Restoration Review.* It was apparent to the younger man that the elders of the big church that supported the Chair, who happened to find out that questionable literature was being read by some of those at the Chair, had urged the prominent minister to register his warning.

The idea that the younger minister got from the conversation was that a man might be viewed with suspicion by the brethren if he read from Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, and that if he has any ambitions of success among Churches of Christ he would do well to stop such questionable practices.

It was within this rather sensitive climate that the young preacher went into the office of the director of the Chair in order to share with his superior a very provocative article that he had noticed in one of the brotherhood papers. Sitting across from the director the young minister held an opened copy of the *Firm Foundation,* and he read slowly and distinctly the article that he thought the director would appreciate. Once he had finished the director was as enthusiastic as he was, agreeing that we need more writing like that, and eagerly inquired as to who might be writing like that in the *Firm Foundation.* The young minister then revealed his trick. He had hidden a copy of *Mission Messenger* inside the *Firm Foundation,* and had been reading to the director an article by Carl Ketcherside!

The director responded with embarassment more than anything else, for there wasn't much he could say after having already expressed his approval. The young minister concluded that the director's only complaint was that it was Carl Ketcherside that said it!

I readily concede that this was a dirty trick to pull on anyone, especially a director of a Church of Christ Bible Chair, and yet I must admit that it strikes me as amusing as it is pitiable. It has the humor of a Socrates about it. That old gadfly of Athens had a way of stinging people into a realization of their superficiality, and making them like it. Socrates had a way of causing people to laugh at their own stupidity. This incident at the Bible, Chair should have caused the director to lean back in his chair and laugh heartily at himself. It should have stimulated self-examination.

Nothing reveals the *herd* mind more than the habit of accepting only what comes through the party line. The first test of validity is whether one of *our* men said it. The "who" is more vital than the "what". If one belongs to the party, he can speak the usual shibboleths and hand out trite and superficial remarks and get good pay for it. The party will take care of him, however mediocre he may be. Yet the man who really has something to say is often refused a hearing, as much for *who* he is as for what he might say. This is one of the tragic consequences of the party system. A man need not be especially studious and productive to gain security within the party. He is to know the right people and be loyal to the party. Excellence might even prove to be a handicap. He doesn't have to know

much, nor does he have to say anything much, for no one expects it anyway. But he is expected to be true to the system. This is his bread and butter.

It wasn't so much what Jesus *said* that got him into trouble, though this was certainly part of it, but mainly that h was *he* who was saying it. Many rabbis had taught much of what our Lord taught, as the Talmud is witness. but the big difference was that it was a freelance teacher, one *outside* the party structure, that was doing it.

For example, when Jesus taught in the temple, saying: "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers," (Mk. 11:17) was he not saying what any devout rabbi might say? Why then did the priests and scribes react as they did? "And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and sought a way to destroy him; for they feared him, because all the multitude was astonished at his teaching." (Mk. 11:18) .

Jesus was a problem to the Jewish clergy, not so much because of what he was saying, but because they had no control over him. They couldn't fire him or cut off his salary; nor could they bar him from lectureships or keep him from writing in brotherhood journals. The clergy is quite willing for a man to reprove with strong language like Jesus did *so long* as he remains safely nestled within the party. The party even likes it. They'll say, "Wow, he really let us have it, didn't he?" As long as he looks to the party for money and position they know they have him. He will know how much he can say and where he must stop.

It is the same way in politics. I mean *political* politics, for I've been talking about *religious* politics. An old crony in the Democrat party can romp and rave about the evils in the party, and no one will think much about it. But let him bolt the party and remove himself from their patronage, and then see how they react to him.

Most any orthodox rabbi in the time of Jesus could have issued rebukes against abuses in the temple, even to saying it was being turned into "a den of robbers", for this was but a quotation from the Jewish Bible, and no one would have thought much about it. True, they would not have expected him to turn tables over and get a whip after them like Jesus did, but this is the point. Jesus did not *behave like* a party man. He was free, and it was this freedom that the party could not stand. Since they could not control him they had to destroy him. Party systems must always behave this way for the sake of their own preservation.

R. H. Boll is a good illustration of this in the non-instrumental wing of disciples. At one time he was well situated within the party, serving as front-page editor of the *Gospel Advocate* and used widely by the churches. But when he died many years later he had long been rejected as a heretic and had been virtually forgotten by these same people, able to serve but a small group of churches that came to be known as *premillennial.* What happened? Brother Boll continued to be a great scholar and a deeply spiritual man, one willing

to live a very simple life and serve weak churches. Why then was he cut off with such finality? The stock answer is that it was because he began to teach premillennialism.

If the story is ever told in detail, and I hope that I myself will be able to chronicle it some day since it should be done by a non-premillennialist, the facts will show that the charge of premillennialism was but a pretext. The real reason was that R. H. Boll dared to venture beyond the pale of party control. He put Jesus Christ before the party. And so he was destroyed. The party would have borne with brother Boll's premillennialism, for he did not make it a test of fellowship anyway, if he had been willing to kow-tow to the system. The party did not hang him because he was a premillennialist, but because he insisted on being a free man in Christ.

When I was but a youth at FreedHardeman College I accompanied other students to a Murch-Witty unity meeting in Indianapolis one weekend. One thing that stands out in my mind about that experience is that I got to see the infamous R. H. Boll. It was the first Church of Christ heretic that I had seen, and I had been so conditioned to suspect him that I am sure I was thoroughly prepared to reject *anything* the man said.

It was almost 20 years before I saw him again, and by this time I too had had the sentence of death upon me long enough to view the brother in a different light. I was no more premillennial than before, but I was freer than before. Anyway, I didn't think in terms of brother Boll being a premillennialist when I visited him in Louisville, but as a *brother.* He was an old man by then, and he was no longer the issue in the brotherhood that he had been. He was pretty well forgotten. I found a man who had a sweet, quiet trust in Jesus Christ, a man free of bitterness and resentment, and one who was content to serve in the humble ways appointed of the Lord. Yet he was a man of such tremendous talent that he could have sat among the high priests of the party had he chosen to. He chose freedom instead, and thank God that he did. May his tribe increase, whether they be premillennialisrs or not!

Brother Boll wrote a very fine tract on *What Must I Do to be Saved?*, if I remember the title correctly. It was an ideal tract to hand to a man of the world, for it was written with such love and understanding. I recall some of the Church of Christ ministers com menting upon the tract, pointing to its excellence. One of them said, "It is too bad that it was written by R. H. Boll." That shows how important the *who* is! The tract did not, of course, touch upon the millennial question, but was rather a sound, forceful presentation of the gospel. But orthodoxy could not use it. It was written by the wrong man!

I have long since been convinced that it matters not how much excellence one might achieve through diligent study, or how much he might have to offer a group of believers. or how much he might know regarding a particular subject or problem, he will *not* be used unless he is a party man. On the other hand, it matters not how mediocre and superficial a man is, even to the point of stupidity, the party will find a place for him somewhere as

long as he is loyal to the party. This is true, of course, not only among our own factions, but throughout all sectarianism. A *free* Southern Baptist or a *free* Roman Catholic priest is going to have just as rough a time as a *free* Church of Christ man, or nearly so. And one is just as likely to be out in the cold as the next one. That is why I urge all Christian workers who take Restoration seriously, the concerned ones, to have a means of livelihood other than the party.

I am sometimes amused when one within the party says things that others of us are branded for saying. The following, which I take from a Church of Christ bulletin, will illustrate what I mean. Read it and decide who it sounds like:

> We have grown far more exclusive and isolated than our restoration heritage should permit. It is imperative that we return to the plea of the pioneers and present ourselves as Christians only. Satan has greatly neutralized our gains and virtually isolated our voices by con. vincing us that any faithful effort to restore the church must inevitably challenge, and antagonize the motives and methods of all other believers.
>
> *We must begin at home,* within the restoration family in working toward greater rapport and understanding. More dialogue and less diatribe is needed between dissenting groups within our own movement. We will not convince the world that ours is a unity movement until our own sense of fellowship draws *us* closer together.

We are delighted, of course, that this was written and published, whether by a Carl Ketcherside or a minister of one of the largest non-instrument Churches of Christ. This time it was the latter. We know, of course, that these words, however true or however badly needed, would never have found expression in orthodox circles, had they not been said by the right person. How far this respected and influential minister will carry the convictions expressed only time will tell.

Though it may be slow in coming, this struggle for a freer and more loving brotherhood is going to be victorious. There will be more and more voices raised like this one of the minister of the big Texas church. People are tiring of sectarianism, littleness and narrowness. They want a broader and richer Christian fellowship. And it will come. When it comes we will, of course, be less sectarian than we are now. But it may be predicted that the party stalwarts in that day, having been led by the people more than they lead the people, will convince themselves that they always believed and taught that way.

"Reject a brother because he differed with us on instrumental music? … Not call on a visiting minister to pray because he was a premillennialist? … Suppose that *we* were the only Christians? … Why, we never believed things like that! Oh, maybe a few fanatics, but not the majority of us … We've always endeavored to lead the church into this broader fellowship … It is a satisfying accomplishment … Carl Ketcherside? … Who was he?" — *the Editor*

Jesus insisted that the greatest ritual service is the service of human need. It is an odd thing to think that, with the possible exception of the day in the Synagogue at Nazareth, we have no evidence that Jesus ever conducted a church service in his life on earth, but we have abundance of evidence that He fed the hungry, and comforted the sad and cared for the sick. Christian service is not the service of any liturgy or ritual; it is the service of human need. Christian service is not monastic retiral; it is involvement in all the tragedies and problems and demands of the human situation.—*William Barkley*

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"*How Vast the Resources of His Power …" No. 1*

RESOURCES OF POWER

Our generation has been described as an age of riot and revolt, a time of lawlessness, danger, and confusion. If Elton Trueblood can call it "a cut flower age", Bob Hope can dub it "a pressure-cooker world", and Max Lerner "the age of overkill". Psychologists have come to speak of nations as well as individuals as *neurotic.* It is an age of the aspirin and tranquilizer. Ours is a nervous world, desperate for some assurance that calamity is not just around the corner. Billy Graham calls it "a world aflame". Even theologians have begun to speak of God being dead, even if He won't lie down and get Out of their way!

It is consistent to speak of *power* in our kind of a world. Thomas Hobbes, the British philosopher, insisted that man is by nature selfish, brutish, and wolfish, and that his only concern is power over others. Frederich Nietzsche, the first to insist that God is dead, saw in human nature an insatiable longing for power, and his idea of man as Superman was so persuasive that it inspired Hitler, who was convinced that Nazi Germany was destined to become a super race.

Yes, men do seek power in every aspect of human relations. Power is *sought* through political genius, despite Lord Acton's warning that "power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Power is sought in education and intelligence, to which Frances Bacon bears witness when he says: "Knowledge is power." Bacon could add: "The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall; the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall."

Power is sought in money, reputation, and position. It is sought every where, whether by the woman in her sex appeal or by a clergyman in his orthodoxy. But by whomever or wherever we may conclude that history has proved the poet Shelley right when he wrote: "Power, like a desolating pestilence, pollutes whatever it touches."

This is the power that the world seeks. The natural man wants power as an end in itself, not as a means for doing good to others, but to gratify one's own pride. "Power is poison" to such a one, to use Henry Adams' words, and his end is ruin. He is like the man who gains the whole world, but loses his own soul. The power-crazed man destroys himself, for his lust is insatiable.

There is a power, however, that the natural man knows not of. The world neither bestows this power nor understands it. It is like the peace of God that only God can give and the child of God can understand: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give unto you." (John 14:27) This is the power that Paul speaks of in Col. 1:11: "May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy."

The Christian is expected by his Lord to be strong; yet it is commanded of him to "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might." He is urged to "Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." (Eph. 6:10-11) And so Paul could speak of the Christians "as more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). The theme, therefore, in the letters to the seven churches is one of spiritual power and conquest.

To Ephesus the Lord said: "To him who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

To Smyrna the Lord wrote: "He who conquers shall not be hurt by the second death."

To Pergamum the Lord said: "To him who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone which no one knows except him who receives it."

To Thyatira the Lord said: "He who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, I will give him power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . and I will give him the morning star."

To Sardis the Lord said: "He who conquers shall be clad in white garments, and I will not blot his name our of the book of life; I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels."

To Philadelphia the Lord said: "He who conquers I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God; never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem which comes down from my God our of heaven, and my own new name."

To Laodicea the Lord said: "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne."

What blessings these are! How thrilling to contemplate! It is breathtaking to think of eating of the tree of life in the paradise of God; and of being clad in white garments while feasting upon hidden manna; and of inheriting the morning star; and of becoming a pillar in the temple of God; and of sitting with Christ Himself on His glorious throne!

Yet these blessings are for those who have the power to conquer. And we must not forget the terrible truth that only a precious few will be conquerors. “Because wickedness is multiplied most men’s love will grow cold. But he who endures to the end will be saved.” (Mat. 24:12-13) “Nevertheless when the Son of man comes will he find faith on earth?” (Lk. 18:8) “Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Mt. 22:14) “The gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” (Mt.7:14)

What, then, are the resources of power that will make us “more than conquerors through him who loved us”? This is the subject of Paul’s prayer in Ephesians 1:18-19. Notice the reading in Phillip’s translation:

“This is my prayer: That God, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the all-glorious Father, will give you spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of him: that you may receive that inner illumination of the spirit which will make you realize how great is the hope to which he is calling you —the magnificence and splendor of the inheritance promised to Christians —and how tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God. That power is the same divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when he raised him from the dead and gave him the place of supreme honor in Heaven.”

The *New English Bible* renders the phrase about *power* in these words: “… how vast the resources of his power open to us who trust in him.”

Knowledge

Paul prays that the Ephesians will be given “spiritual wisdom and the insight to know more of him.” Knowledge may not be equivalent to virtue, as the Greek philosophers insisted, but the knowledge that the apostle here refers to is surely a resource of power to the child of God. It is in another prayer in the Bible, one made by the Christ himself, that mentions this kind of knowledge: “And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” (Jn. 17:3)

To know more of God! How powerful this can be in our lives! In this context we can agree with Bacon that “Knowledge is power”. This is not merely intellectual apprehensions or knowledge of doctrinal statements. One may have his Bible, hymnal, and prayer book virtually memorized, and yet be void of spiritual wisdom and insight, and consequently void of power. Even when our minds are filled with facts our hearts may be like empty shells. Paul wants the intellect exercised with an ever-fresh apprehension of the grace of God, so that the mind will serve as an avenue to the heart and soul. This kind of understanding comes through prayer, study, and meditation, as well as dedication. It is a

knowledge inspired by the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is a living and constantly growing experience with God, such as the great heroes of the faith experienced:

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth." (Job 19:25)

"Make me to know thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee I wait all the day long." (Psalms 25:4-5)

"I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me." (2 Tim. 1:12)

"By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his own Spirit." (1 Jn. 4:13)

"And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (Jn. 8:32)

Moving in intellectual circles as much as I do as a professor of philosophy, I am constantly reminded of the dangers of what the Bible calls "the wisdom of the world". Diplomas and degrees and all intellectual achievement may be all right for the Christian so long as they cause him to appreciate the wisdom of ignorance. The right kind of education will humble a man, causing him to say with Socrates "I know nothing." But, oh, what a tragedy it is when one trusts in his own wisdom! Lest we forget Paul's evaluation that "the world did not know God through wisdom." (1 Cor. 1:21)

Even though I have been granted a degree or so by some of our great universities, and am privileged to serve on a university faculty and hold membership in learned societies, I do not hesitate to say that I am suspicious of such things. In all these years in the academic world I have found far too few with a simple faith in the Christ. I am often reminded of Paul's language in 1 Cor. 1:26: "Consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth."

Only recently I sat with the Southwestern Philosophical Association in Houston where I listened to erudite discourses on logical positivism and platonic metaphysics. One philosopher spoke seriously and profoundly on the thesis that we can have knowledge apart from truth. Oftentimes at such gatherings I am made to wonder how much in common there can be between a Christian and these secular philosophers. Even while I am with them I feel as if I am at war against them. And so with all the world and its wisdom. The child of God, living a life of trust in Christ, is *in* the world, but is at the same time at war with it.

How unlike the philosophy of Jesus is the wisdom of our secular age: "In that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will." (Lk. 10:21)

How many *babes* are there on university faculties, learned societies, and in positions of honor and prestige? How many are there among the professors of religion and theology, and how many are there in the pulpits across the land? Yea, how many *babes* are there among us in our own congregations? One great source of power becomes a reality in our lives when we humble ourselves and become as children in our quest of the knowledge of God.

Imagination

Paul prays also for the "inner illumination of the spirit", which the RSV renders as "having the eyes of your hearts enlightened". The Jewish translator Hugh Schonfield gives "mental vision" as that which Paul prayed might be illumined. While this is certainly a reference to man's intellect and mind, it also refers to his feelings and will. The *heart* refers to the very center of personality. Here the spiritual life pulsates; here the Holy Spirit dwells. What the eye is to the body, so is the mind or heart to the soul. Paul is here praying that our minds might be inspired by God's grace, so that we might better understand the nature of things as we view God and the universe through the windows of our soul.

One capacity of the mind that can be a great resource of power is the imagination. By means of this fabulous faculty man can live again and again the great moments of his life: his first train ride, his little red wagon, his first day at school, his wedding day. Man's mind can recall the excitement of the battlefield or the bitterness of his mother's funeral as if they were yesterday. What mother is there that cannot remember her children when they were but little ones playing at her feet? Through her mind's eye she can recall how each of her babies looked, even though they have now grown old and have children of their own.

What insights might be ours if our imagination were so inspired by the Holy Spirit that we could recapture the great moments of the Bible as if we ourselves were there. The psychologists call this *creativity.* With our mental vision enlightened we can create in our own minds a fellowship with the Christ that makes him as real as if he were with us in flesh and blood. We must learn to grasp more intensely the realities of Christian experience that may otherwise be restricted to the printed words upon a page. The world of God is more than ink and paper. It involves a living Person and a communion of minds.

In calling for an enlightened imagination I do not mean, of course, that the mind is to indulge in fancy. It is not the work of grace for the mind to imagine things which never happened nor could happen. We have reference ro an application of the mind to the *real*, not the unreal. One man can read the Bible and sees only words. Another man reads the same passage and shares in an event. We gain insight through involvement, and involvement is possible by means of enlightened eyes. David's prayer might well be on the lips of us all: "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psa. 119:18) We do not behold wondrous things from the Bible simply by reading it.

Suppose, for example, that one is reading the Story of our Lord's crucifixion. We should try to imagine the scene as vividly as we can, employing all five senses as much as possible through our mind's eye. Can you not *hear* the troubled prayer of our Lord as he prayed in the garden: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"? Can you not *see* the cold and calloused soldiers as they platted a crown of thorns and placed it cruelly upon our Lord's brow? Can you not *feel* the hurt and indignity suffered by our Lord as he was scourged by his enemies and led away to be slain like a criminal? Can you not sense in your innermost being the horrors of the crucifixion? And does your soul not thrill at the story of the resurrection? Can you not see the empty tomb with its stone rolled back, and can you not feel with John as he rushed in and found the cloths neatly folded and the body of the Lord gone?

If we take with us an illumined imagination as we study, our pilgrimage through the Bible should be exciting if not ecstatic. Whether it be the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt, the transfiguration of our Lord, or the raising of Lazarus, there is a very real sense in which all these things happen all over again *just for us* as we transpose ourselves to the event through mental vision. What a resource of power this can be for us all!

Hope

One of the reasons for Paul's prayer for enlightened hearts was that they might "know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints." Hope is thus a resource of spiritual strength, enabling the saint to persevere even in the face of persecution. To the Romans the apostle could say: "Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2) He goes on to say in verse 5 that "hope does not disappoint us."

Is it not true that this world offers many disappointments? Life is full of uncertainties. Fame and fortune are never really adequate. Even friends sometimes disappoint us. A long life, which most of us seem to want, likewise proves frustrating, so much so sometimes that we grow weary of living and welcome death. How marvelous it is to live in hope!

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you." (l Pet. 1:3-4)

What a tremendous resource of power the hope of the resurrection must have been to Paul, for we hear him saying:

"For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends

on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that if possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead." (Philip. 3:8-11)

What can be more strengthening to the saints than these words in 1 John 3:2: "Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

We shall see him as he is! With hope like that it matters little whether we get that new car or get to vacation in Florida, does it? The Christian has no *real* problems if he believes that he will someday see the Lord in his glory-and will become like him!

And so John could add: "Every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." The saint keeps himself pure through hope, for he knows how pure Christ is, and he has assurance that his Lord is coming again.

Prayer

It is when we turn from self-centeredness and become child-like (though not *childish)* that we are better able to draw upon the great reservoirs of power. In its purest form prayer is a child talking to his father. And what greater resource of power does a child have than the strength of his father? It is said of our Lord that "he went out into the hills to pray" and he considered his needs so great that "all night he continued in prayer to God". (Lk. 6:12) If we are so weak, it may be that we pray too little.

It is a sweet reality that our Father knows what we need before we ask him. We can believe that those things we *do* need he will give. "Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive it, and you will." (Mk. 11:24) It is a simple, child-like trust in God that accepts the difference between what we need and what the Father knows we need. It could be dangerous to pray for what we really need!

Prayer brings men together as hardly anything else can, and it can change their lives like hardly anything else can. In prayer man finds oneness with all other children of God who are yielding themselves to the Father of all. It is lovely to think of how countless sons of God are at any given time lifting up holy hands in prayer to God. There is no greater symbol of brotherhood: a mass of hands stretched heavenward in recognition that God is the Father of us all, regardless of race or color. If we can think of this as *a vertical fellowship,* then we should be able to direct the power that comes through prayer toward *a horizontal fellowship,* and thus complete the triangle that has God at the top angle and man *with* man at the lower angles.

John saw something like this on the isle of Patmos: "When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints". (Rev. 5:8)

Is it not thrilling to think of our prayers presented, like burning incense, before the throne of God?

If your prayers are there (especially if there are prayers for *me)* and if my prayers are there (especially if there are prayers for *you),* then ought we not be able to pray *together* here? Now, really, does it make sense for brethren who have their prayers in the golden bowls of incense in heaven not be able even to speak to each other?

Resources Unlimited

So vast are our resources of power that we can indeed move mountains if we will but tap the wellsprings. Paul found power in suffering itself: "God comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God". (2 Cor. 1:3-4) He found strength in weakness itself: "When I am weak, then I am strong".

One of our sisters in Christ has been subjected to immense difficulties in recent years, even to the point of her own family falling apart around her. We have attempted to offer some comfort and to sit with her in her loneliness. The other day she sent this poem, her own creation:

Because you do not yield belief in me,
The threat'ning crags that rise my war to bar
I conquer, inch by crumbling inch, to see

The goal afar!

She has found strength even in tragedy. No wonder Paul could write: "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance". (Rom. 5:3)

Oh, what vast powers we have at our disposal. Whether it be the fellowship of the saints, the study of God's word, ministering to the needy, the worship of God, the disposal of our money, the preaching of the gospel and many things more, they are resources of power for those who trust.

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From whence does my help come?
My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth. (Psa. 121:1-2) —*the Editor*

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WE WENT TO CHURCH TONIGHT

By Robert Meyers

A dear friend of mine once told me that most church services reminded him of some lines from Clement Moore's "A Visit From St. Nicholas." He said that when the songs were finished and the preacher had mounted to his pulpit, the audience seemed to settle down comfortably and prepare itself *not* to listen, as in these lines:

And mamma in her kerchief,
and I in my cap,
Had just settled out brains for a
long winter's nap.

I knew at once that he was right for I had seen exactly this ever since I was a small child. I have even wondered whether preachers must not school themselves to overlook the apathy of their hearers. Certainly it is dismaying to sit where one can carefully observe how little serious attention is paid by the audience to the average evangelistic effort.

Women often fuss endlessly with their small children, a legitimate activity which I have suspected sometimes they rather appreciated as a relief from boredom. Men learn to fix their eyes on the preacher and turn their minds to other thoughts. It is apparent from the glazed remoteness of their eyes that this is what they have done and that they are really not listening at all.

I must confess that I am sympathetic with these devices for relieving tedium even though I wish they were not necessary. After twenty-five years in the pulpit I know how little most of us have to say that is relevant to our hearers. In sheer self-defense they are obliged to checkmate our droning inanities until they can escape home and dutifully report to someone, "We went to church tonight."

Not long ago I attended a typical gospel meeting in a small church and sat behind a young man, his wife, and their two small boys. The boys were weary and irritable to begin with and they became steadily more miserable as the hour and a half wore on. The mother was clearly exhausted, but dutiful to the last wracked corpuscle. While she wrestled to quiet the children (three and five years old), she cast occasional quick glances of meek reproach at her oblivious husband.

This worthy, meanwhile, gazed studiously at a copy of the King James version of the Bible. It was one which he had picked up idly from the seat, hoping, I suspect, to alleviate the monotony of the all-too-familiar stereotypes from the pulpit. He looked so disillusioned, so infinitely bored, and yet at the same time so terribly conscientious about the heralded worth of the Bible, that I yearned to lean over and whisper to him: "Try

Phillips some time, and see how much more exciting it is! Or perhaps Goodspeed. or the *New English Bible*. You'll be amazed at how much more you'll get from your reading."

I fought off that urge, knowing the young husband would have been convinced of my madness for the rest of his life. Yet all the while I knew the compulsion was a good one, because the Bible is our most precious legacy and there can be no greater tragedy than that it should bore one.

As I observed the family, a scene unrolled slowly which I had witnessed a hundred times before. Occasionally one of the little boys would move a bit too vigorously and his father would thump him vigorously with his knuckles in an action so reflexive that he did not even bother to take his eyes off the page. The child would then slide over to his mother's side for comfort and she would patiently rearrange him, glancing meanwhile with some not-to-be-fathomed perplexity at her husband.

In a little while the smaller boy would cash in on his most successful appeal, whispering urgently in his mother's ear. While she struggled out past protruding knees in her row, the five-year-old would watch the departure with a mounting realization that adventures were occurring in which he had, alas, no part. Scooting over, he would stretch to ask his father where mommy had gone. The response would he a hard shaking against the decorous oaken pew and a fierce admonition: "Shut up! Be quiet! I'll take you out and spank you right now if you don't get still!"

Neither the little boy nor I would understand this very well. Perhaps I had it harder than he, because I had an additional thought to plague me: how can a man turn from reading the Bible to show such fury to a tired child? It happened three times that night, as I had seen it happen so many other times in my life, and each time it seemed more incongruous, I had an urge to lean forward again and start that whispering madness:

"Young man, the God whom you came here to worship gave you this little boy. He is more precious to God, even, than he is to you. He is weary and he does not understand what the preacher is saying and he is terribly bored because there is nothing here to catch and hold his attention. Why not take him quietly home, where he belongs right now, and talk to him softly for a while before you tuck the covers about his shoulders and leave him to blessed sleep? I assure you that this is the best thing you can do for your God right now."

Mad as that would have seemed to the young father, I know it was good advice if I had dared give it. There are times when taking so young a family out to an evening service for adults is a form of cruelty rather than an act of profitable devotion. The pressures of family life are greater than ever now, time is in short supply, and fathers and mothers may often more rewardingly give themselves to their tiny children than to the latest in a series of visiting evangelists. It is even conceivable, were they well taught, that at the end of a holy

time together in their own homes, they might say to one another with a smile: "We *were* His church tonight."

This will sound like rankest heresy to all those who boast of having "never missed a service" in all their years of parental care, but it is a conviction much thought upon and most passionately held. We often link religion with tedium so inseparably for our children that a lifetime may not be enough for their discovering differently. "Be still and know that I am God," our book says. More of us need desperately to create those quiet hours when we can learn with our children who He is.

I do not contemplate with joy the ire these words will arouse in some of my colleagues who travel widely over the evangelistic circuits. Party prestige depends heavily on how many people can be "gotten out" to another meeting at which the same old cliches are likely to ring in the rafters. To stimulate jaded minds, advertising and promotional schemes proliferate wildly, ranging from tricky capsules and fake fortune cookies to elaborate panegyrics of the latest evangelist's monumental successes around the country.

Perhaps not strangely, these schemes work better with members than with non-members. The docile herds in any sizeable city move from one congregation to another to support the latest effort, even though in private most admit that they are "preached out" and yearn for a quiet evening at home. Some ninety-five per cent of all such audiences are composed of these dutiful persons who have been persuaded how meritorious it will be if they can help fill the building.

Scandalous as it will seem to many, Carl Ketcherside was right when he said that "the world will not be saved by our own fluttering about from one meeting to another." He speaks, as I do, of that *dutiful* response to artificial stimulants, not of the joyous excitement which a meaningful church service always inspires in eager Christians. No one with much experience in church work can doubt that he is right when he speaks of how we labor "to keep those coming whom we can never get going." The pews are filled with dutiful deadwood from which no fire will ever blaze out.

Can we hope to get away from all this machinery so long as preacher prestige is at stake? With the ever-spiraling gimmicks for luring out the reluctant can we hope for a "name" preacher who will dare to tell people there may be something better than running from meeting to meeting? A tragic multitude I have known over a quarter of a century have made their whole piety consist of attendance. They have rested their hopes on having gone here and there, endlessly, no matter how frayed their nerves or how needy their families might be for quiet companionship at home. They deserve now to find out that no evangelist or church building has a monopoly on Jesus, with whom, if they will learn how, they may walk in gracious intimacy away from the constant crowd. *—867 Spaulding, Wichita, Kan.*

A NEW BOOK BY ROBERT MEYERS

Voices of Concern: Critical Studies in Church of Christism edited by Robert Meyers, is soon to be published. It consists of essays by members of the Church of Christ, some of whom have "left" us and some of whom have not, who are concerned about our condition. It is a responsible and provoking volume. The testimonies will amaze you, if not alarm you.

Reserve your copy with us at once. We will mail you your copy as soon as they come from the press. You will be billed. The price will be moderate.

Robert Meyers (Ph.D., Washington U.) is Professor of English at Friends University, and editor of the forthcoming book, *Voices of Concern: Critical Studies in Church of Christism.* He is also minister of the Riverside Church of Christ in Wichita.

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OFFICE NOTES

It has been over ten years since we have had to call upon our readers for financial help, even though there have been some unsolicited donations to our work all along. It is now urgent that we have the assistance of those who are willing to lend a helping hand, for we have fallen some $400.00 behind, and the bills keep coming in. Our subscription price has remained only $1.00 since we began publication back in 1952 with the first issue of *Bible Talk.* Many receive the paper at the club rate for only 50 cents. Yet we have increased the paper to 20 pages each issue, 200 pages for the year. And we have added the expense of art work each month. No wonder we are going broke! Since our equipment for mailing is old and simple, our workshop is crowded into what should be the dining room of our new home, and we all labor without wages (indeed we *pay* for the privilege) we have been able to hold our own on the balance sheet. Add to this the profit on books that all goes to the paper, and the donations that both congregations and individuals sometimes make, and you have the story of our income.

Lately this has not been enough. We need your help. If you believe in what we are trying to do, and if you are willing to share with us some of the dollars you return to the Lord's work, we will promise to get maximum mileage out of every penny. We are *stingy* (some call it *frugality)* even with our own money. We are downright impossible with the other fellow's money. My wife, who cares for the mailing, will not even let me buy name

cards for the address plates. She makes me have our printer cut the cards from paper we salvage from wastepaper baskets at the university!

We do not, of course, do our own printing. This is done by the same Dallas printer that has been doing our work since 1952. Even though he has done well in keeping the price down for us, printing is still a very expensive item. And postage, which we could ignore as an expense item back in 1952, has increased so many times that we must now reckon with it.

Well, that's enough of our woes to get the point across. We will appreciate your help. We especially need *sustained* support. If only a few would help us with small monthly donations, it would probably be adequate. We will acknowledge all donations.

BOOKS

We have a new supply of a book that is popular with our readers. Others of you might want to order *Making Ethical Decisions* for only $1.00. A new supply of *The Threshold of Christianity* by Toombs is also available for $1.50. It tells what happened between the Testaments in an interesting and informative manner.

A new book by Elton Trueblood on *The Humour of Christ* is available from London in paperback for $1.60. He shows the use Jesus made of humour and irony, and he describes our Lord's strategy of laughter.

You will appreciate reading *Adventures of a Deserter* by Jan Overduin, which is about the prophet Jonah. You will find it inspiring and different. Jonah will forever be more human to you, and you will see yourself in his *adventure* to such a degree as to wonder if you too aren't sometimes a deserter. It is a hardback and a good-looking volume. Only $3.50.

One of the famous devotional classics is *A Serious Call* by William Law. Written 200 years ago, it lives on and on, and it is now available in a nice hardback at only $2.95. Elton Trueblood writes the foreword. Law writes on discipline, happiness, devotion, duty, doing God's will, etc. You will be glad we told you about it. Some readers have asked us of its availability.

We can supply William Barclay's *Many Witnesses, One Lord*, which is a very helpful survey of the New Testament. Only $2.50. Barclay's *The Promise of the Spirit* is a study of virtually everything the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. Only $2.50.

We are offering Carl Ketcherside's annual volumes of *Mission Messenger* on our Credit Plan, along with all other books we mention in this column. This means you can buy now and pay later at the rate of 10% of the balance each month, or $5.00 monthly, whichever is the most. So you could buy *all* of Ketcherside's beautiful volumes at one time and pay a little each month. He now has six volumes, starting with *Thoughts on Fellowship* in 1957-58, and continuing with *Covenants of God* in 1959-60, *The Paths of*

Peace in *1961-62, The Unity of the Spirit* in *1963, The Brotherhood of Faith* in 1964, and *The Twisted Scriptures* in 1965. You can order all of these from us for only $19.50. This is very fine material and will one day be a collector's item. If you need only part of these, the double volumes (the first three) are $3.50 each; the last three, which are *single* years, are $3.00.

This is the first issue of *Restoration Review* for 1966. All ten issues of this volume will be published in permanent book form early in 1967. It will be a 200-page volume with handsome dust jacket. The title will be "Resources of Power", which is the theme for this year. Reserve your copy now. The price will be moderate.

Subscription price for this journal is $1.00 per year, or 50 cents per name in club of six or more.

Restoration Review, 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas 76201.

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